

REMARKS

Claims 1-39, 41, and 42 are pending in this application, with claims 1, 7, 13, 14, 17, 25, 27, 30, and 38 being independent. Claims 14 and 27 have been amended. Claim 40 has been canceled.

Applicants acknowledge with appreciation the Examiner's indication that claims 23, 24, 36, and 37 are directed to allowable subject matter if rewritten in independent form. As more fully described below, Applicants have amended independent claim 14 to incorporate the features of claim 23 and 24 in the alternative. Similarly, Applicants have amended independent claim 27 to incorporate the features of claims 36 and 37 in the alternative.

Independent claims 14, 27, and 40, and their dependent claims 15, 16, 21, 22, 27-29, 34, and 35 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent Number 6,633,549 ("Fedane") in view of U.S. Patent Number 6,215,854 ("Walance").

Applicants have amended claims 14 and 27 to obviate this rejection. With respect to canceled claim 40, this rejection is rendered moot.

In particular, Applicants have amended independent claim 14 to include the features of allowable dependent claims 23 and 24 in the alternative and have amended independent claim 27 to include the features of allowable dependent claims 36 and 37 in the alternative.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of claims 14 and 27, along with their dependent claims.

Applicants submit that all claims are in condition for allowance.

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No fees are believed to be due. However, please apply any other charges or credits to
Deposit Account 06-1050.

Respectfully submitted,

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